Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Original) A method comprising:

injecting a relatively small volume of a pilot fuel into a combustion chamber of a compression ignition engine so as to ignite a relatively large volume of a liquid primary fuel in the combustion chamber, while controlling at least one of a timing, Tp, of initiation of pilot fuel injection, a pilot fuel injection duration, Dp, and an ignition delay period, Di, such that Dp/Di is < 1.

2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the controlling step comprises obtaining a mixing period, Dm > 1° c.a., where Dm = Di – Dp.

3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the controlling step comprises obtaining a Dm of between 5° c.a. and 40° c.a.

4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the controlling step comprises altering autoignition timing, Ti.

5. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein Di is altered by adjusting at least one of

(A) a temperature, ACT, of an air charge admitted into the combustion chamber;

(B) a pressure, MAP, of the air charge admitted into the combustion chamber, and

(C) an air/fuel ratio, lambda, of a natural gas/air mixture in the combustion chamber.

6. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 5, wherein said ACT is adjusted by at least one of

(A) altering a percentage of exhaust gas recirculation, EGR, from an exhaust of the engine to the combustion chamber,

(B) altering operation of at least one of 1) a supercharger, 2) a turbocharger, 3) an aftercooler, and 4) an expansion turbine located downstream of the aftercooler,

(C) altering operation of an intercooler which cools intake air being supplied to the combustion chamber, and

(D) injecting water into an intake mixture.

7. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 5, wherein said MAP is adjusted by adjusting at least one of

A) an operating state of a turbo air bypass valve to control a percentage of intake airflow that bypasses the compressor output of the turbocharger of the engine, and

B) a waste gate or a variable turbine nozzle of a turbocharger.

8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 5, wherein lambda is adjusted by altering at least one of

A) a value of a vaporized fuel charge supplied to the intake system or combustion chamber,

B) a mass of the air charge supplied to the combustion chamber,

C) ACT,

D) MAP, and

E) a fraction of firing cylinders, FFC, in a skipfire operation.

9. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 4, wherein said Ti is altered by adjusting exhaust gas recirculation, EGR.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the controlling step comprises adjusting at least one of Tp and Dp.

11. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the controlling step comprises adjusting a rate of pilot fuel combustion in the combustion

chamber by adjusting at least one of a size, a number, a distribution, and a fraction of vaporization of pilot fuel droplets in the combustion chamber.

12. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the injecting step comprises operating an electronically actuated fuel injector coupled to a source of a fuel that is combustible by compression-ignition.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the injector comprises one which injects fuel in an expanding cloud during at least a substantial portion of an injection event.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said pilot fuel has a relatively narrow boiling point temperature range and lower autoignition temperature than said primary fuel.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein said pilot fuel comprises diesel fuel and said primary fuel comprises Dimethyl Ether.

16. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said primary fuel is supplied to the engine so as to ~~homogenous~~homogeneously mix with air, thereby

permitting ~~homogenous~~homogeneous charge compression ignition (HCCI) of said primary fuel.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 15, wherein said primary fuel is supplied to an air intake system of said engine as a fog of droplets having a mean diameter in the micron range.

18. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein said droplets have a mean diameter of about 5 microns to about 20 microns.

19. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein said primary fuel is supplied via at least one fogging nozzle.

20. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein said primary fuel is injected either directly into an air intake manifold of said engine or into an inlet of a compressor of a turbocharger of said engine.

21. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

supplying a relatively large volume of a liquid primary fuel to a combustion chamber of a compression ignition engine so as to form a ~~homogenous~~homogeneous mixture of said primary fuel and air in said combustion chamber;

injecting a relatively small volume of a pilot fuel into said combustion chamber, said pilot fuel having a lower autoignition temperature than said primary fuel and having a relatively narrow boiling point temperature range; and

autoigniting said pilot fuel by compression ignition and igniting said primary fuel through combustion of said pilot fuel, thereby obtaining pilot assisted HCCI combustion of said primary fuel.

22. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 21, further controlling at least one of a timing, Tp, of initiation of pilot fuel injection, a pilot fuel injection duration, Dp, and an ignition delay period, Di, such that Dp/Di is < 1.

23. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 21, wherein said pilot fuel comprises diesel fuel and said primary fuel comprises Dimethyl Ether.

24. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 21, wherein said primary fuel is supplied to an air intake system of said engine as a fog of droplets having a diameter in the micron range.

25. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 24, wherein said droplets have a diameter of about 5 microns to about 20 microns.

26. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein said primary fuel is supplied via at least one fogging nozzle.

27. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 26, wherein said primary fuel is supplied via a plurality of fogging nozzles, and further comprising adjusting a primary fuel supply quantity by at least one of

A) adjusting primary fuel supply pressure;

B) pulse-width-modulating flow through at least one of said nozzles;

C) varying an orifice diameter of at least one of said nozzles; and

D) disabling at least one of said nozzles.

28. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 26, wherein said fogging nozzle has an impaction device against which injected fuel impinges to atomize fuel droplets.

29. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

A) injecting a liquid fuel into an air stream so as to form a ~~homogeneous~~homogeneous mixture of air and atomized droplets of fuel having a mean diameter of less than about 50 microns;

B) admitting said mixture into a combustion chamber of an internal combustion engine; and

C) igniting the liquid fuel in said mixture by compression ignition so as to achieve ~~homogenous~~homogeneous charge compression ignition (HCCI) of said liquid fuel.

30. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 29, wherein the injecting step comprises injecting atomized droplets having a mean diameter of between about 5 microns and about 20 microns.

31. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

A) injecting a liquid fuel into an air stream so as to form a ~~homogenous~~homogeneous mixture of air and atomized droplets of fuel having a mean diameter of less than about 50 microns;

B) admitting said mixture into a combustion chamber of an internal combustion engine; and

C) igniting the liquid fuel in said mixture by compression ignition so as to achieve ~~homogenous~~homogeneous charge compression ignition (HCCI) of said liquid fuel, wherein, after the injecting step, said liquid fuel evaporates and cools the air in said mixture.

32. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 29, wherein said liquid fuel is injected via at least one fogging nozzle.

33. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

A) injecting a liquid fuel into an air stream so as to form a ~~homogenous~~homogeneous mixture of air and atomized droplets of fuel having a mean diameter of less than about 50 microns;

B) admitting said mixture into a combustion chamber of an internal combustion engine; and

C) igniting the liquid fuel in said mixture by compression ignition so as to achieve ~~homogenous~~homogeneous charge compression ignition (HCCI) of said liquid fuel, wherein said liquid fuel is injected via a plurality of fogging nozzles, and further comprising adjusting a fuel supply quantity by at least one of

A) adjusting fuel supply pressure;

B) pulse-width-modulating flow through at least one of said nozzles;

C) varying an orifice diameter of at least one of said nozzles; and

D) disabling at least one of said nozzles.

34. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 32, wherein said fogging nozzle has an impaction device against which injected fuel impinges to atomize fuel droplets.

35. (Currently Amended) ~~The method as recited in claim 29~~ A method comprising:

A) injecting a liquid fuel into an air stream so as to form a homogeneous mixture of air and atomized droplets of fuel having a mean diameter of less than about 50 microns;

B) admitting said mixture into a combustion chamber of an internal combustion engine; and

C) igniting the liquid fuel in said mixture by compression ignition so as to achieve homogeneous charge compression ignition (HCCI) of said liquid fuel, wherein said liquid fuel is a primary fuel, and further comprising injecting a relatively small volume of a pilot fuel into said combustion chamber, said pilot fuel having a lower autoignition temperature than said primary fuel and having a relatively narrow boiling point temperature range; and wherein

the compression ignition step comprises autoigniting said pilot fuel by compression ignition and igniting said primary fuel through combustion of said pilot fuel, thereby obtaining pilot assisted HCCI of said primary fuel.

36. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 35, wherein said pilot fuel comprises diesel fuel and said primary fuel comprises Dimethyl Ether.

37. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 35, further controlling at least one of a timing, Tp, of initiation of pilot fuel injection, a pilot fuel injection duration, Dp, and an ignition delay period, Di, such that Dp/Di is < 1.

38. (Currently Amended) A method of operating an engine having a cylinder which includes an engine head and a piston which is reciprocateably translatable in the cylinder to define a variable-volume combustion chamber between the engine head and the piston, the method comprising the steps of:

(A) performing an intake stroke of the piston;

(B) performing a compression stroke of the piston after the intake stroke;

(C) admitting a ~~homogenous~~homogeneous charge of a liquid fuel and air into the combustion chamber during one of the intake stroke and the compression stroke, said ~~homogenous~~homogeneous charge being formed by injecting said liquid fuel into the intake air stream in the form of atomized droplets having a mean diameter of less than about 30 microns;

(D) injecting a pilot fuel charge into the combustion chamber during the compression stroke, said pilot fuel having a lower autoignition temperature than said primary fuel and having a relatively narrow boiling point temperature range;

(E) combusting said pilot fuel charge to ignite said primary fuel by HCCI, wherein the steps of injecting the pilot fuel charge and igniting the pilot fuel charge comprise, on a cycle-by-cycle, full load and speed range basis

(1) initiating pilot fuel injection at a time, Tp,

(2) continuing pilot fuel injection for a duration, Dp, and

(3) igniting the pilot fuel charge by compression-ignition at an autoignition point, Ti, occurring an ignition delay interval Di after Tp; and

(4) controlling at least one of Tp, Dp, and Di to maintain $Dp/Di < 1$.

39. (New) The method as recited in claim 29, wherein the injecting step is formed on a full range of engine operating speeds and engine loads.

40. (New) The method as cited in claim 29, wherein a turbocharger and a cooler are located in series in an air intake passage through which said air stream passes, and wherein the injecting step comprises injecting the liquid fuel into the air intake passage upstream of the turbocharger.